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CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY

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CONTACT:

Kris Deutschman — (916) 425-7174

CHSRA ELECTS LATINA TO LEAD ITS BOARD

Orange, CA – The California High-Speed Rail Authority Board today elected Fran Florez as its chairperson making her the first woman to chair the Board and one of a handful of Latina leaders to chair a state board.

“I’m both honored and excited to lead the board at a time when the project is achieving such momentum,” said Florez. “The historic precedent, bringing high-speed trains to California and bringing Americans the same type of travel opportunities that are enjoyed in Europe and Japan, is an important personal and professional goal for me.”

An appointee of the Senate Rules Committee, Florez previously served as vice chair of the Authority and brings a Central Valley perspective to the Board. She is active in both politics and the private sector, and currently is Mayor of Shafter, serving on its city council since 1996.

“Living in the Central Valley, I’ve seen first-hand the need for a statewide transportation system that can quickly and seamlessly move people and goods from the Central Valley to California’s major metropolitan centers,” said Florez. “We need high-speed trains to serve our growing population. The antiquated transportation infrastructure we rely on desperately needs to be updated and high-speed trains are the answer not only for the Central Valley but in the grid-lock regions in Los Angeles and the Bay Area.”

Raised and educated in Bakersfield, Florez has seen the Central Valley change from sleepy agricultural area to burgeoning business and residential destination. She has been a voice to both the business and political community in the greater Kern County region. Upon retiring from the banking industry after a 35-year career, she founded Florez & Florez, a consulting firm specializing in energy issues. She is the past president of the Shafter Chamber of Commerce and Kern County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

Giving back to the community is one of the character traits for which Florez is known. She currently serves on the board of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, the Golden Empire Gleaners, San Joaquin Hospital and the Kern County Network for Children. Fran and her husband Ray Florez have two grown children, daughter Kris Miller is a childcare site supervisor for the Paso Robles Unified School District and son Dean Florez is a Senator for the 16th district. Kris and husband Aaron live in Paso Robles. Dean and wife Elsa their children, son Sean and daughter Faith live in Shafter.

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